

# Catchment Group Story

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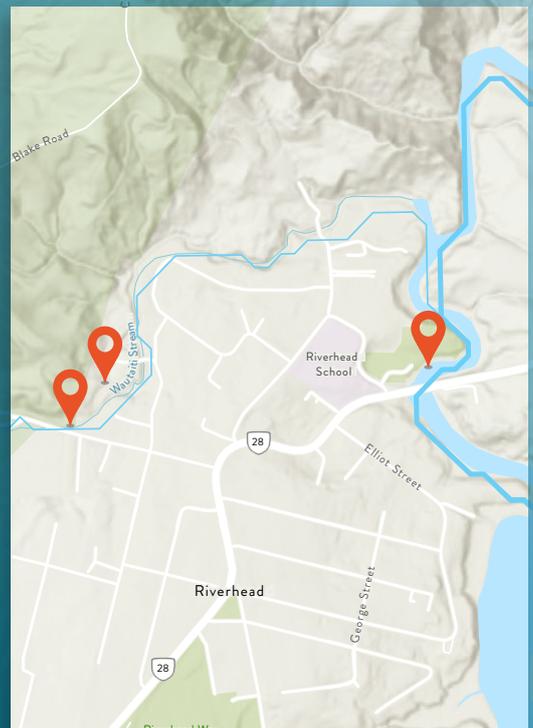


## Rangitopuni Catchment, Riverhead Scouts

Rangitopuni River, Waitematā Harbour

The Rangitopuni River flows through several scenic communities in North Auckland. Its tributaries begin in Dairy Flat, flow through Coatesville, and feed into the Waitematā Harbour at Riverhead. Dairy Stream, Mahoenui Stream, and Wautaiti Stream, along with multiple other tributaries, feed into the Rangitopuni River. Communities within the Rangitopuni catchment are significantly impacted by adverse weather events, with the Auckland Anniversary floods, and Cyclone Gabrielle being the most recent examples.

While there's tremendous community effort focusing on 'bringing back the kiwi' through predator control and terrestrial species translocations in this area, 'Wai Connection – Tatai Ki Te Wai' is engaging the community on a freshwater ecology journey. So far, 'Wai Connection' has witnessed the community's spirit and interest in the life beneath the water's surface.





# Exploring Wautaiti Stream – Riverhead Scouts

## Engaging the Next Generation

In March and April, Hana Aickin and Amy Sadler from 'Wai Connection' worked with the Riverhead Scout Group to explore Wautaiti Stream during their term theme of 'Rivers'. Five engaging sessions were delivered to Keas, Cubs, Scouts, and Venturers – all focusing on highlighting life in their local awa.



### Scouts ages 10–14 years

As the first session, the Scouts group explored the waterfall on Wautaiti Stream, a public space many of the tamariki had visited before.

Activities included:

- » investigating water quality
- » learning about dissolved oxygen
- » measuring visual stream clarity
- » sampling macroinvertebrates and learning they are stream health indicators.

As dusk fell, the session became even more exciting by:

- » checking Gee's minnow traps, and finding common smelt and īnanga
- » exploring the base of the waterfall with spotlights
- » discovering freshwater shrimp, redfin, common bullies, īnanga, and tuna.

It was wonderful to see the tamariki exploring their local awa in a new light, sparking interest in the fascinating world of freshwater ecology.



### Keas ages 6–7 years

The younger Keas explored Wautaiti Stream above the waterfall:

- » investigating with clarity tubes and magnifying glasses
- » observing freshwater bugs up close

Inspired by the session, the Scout Leader returned at night with her new fish spotlighting skills and spotted a 10 cm banded kōkopu!



### Cubs ages 8–10 years

The two Cubs sessions incorporated more games to keep the group moving and engaged, including:

- » imitating īnanga in the *Stream Survival* game
- » doing a habitat scavenger hunt through Murray Jones Reserve
- » exploring the regenerating scrub and muddy banks of the Rangitopuni River.



### Venturers ages 14–17 years

For the older Venturers, 'Wai Connection' facilitated a spotlighting session with a twist, including:

- » used kayaks to journey up the Rangitopuni River and Wautaiti Stream
- » observing changing vegetation from saline tolerant to freshwater species
- » spotting artificial īnanga spawning habitats, and even an occasional possum in the trees.



I thoroughly enjoyed engaging with the Riverhead Scout Group Leaders and the 88 Scouts, Keas, Cubs, and Venturers over five evening sessions. It was exciting to see their growing interest and appreciation for their local freshwater environments.

HANA AICKIN

'Wai Connection' Catchment Coordinator



PHOTO CAPTIONS – Front page: 1. Kayaking up the Wautaiti Stream with the Venturers. Page left: 2. Amy, Briar, and Kate providing an overview of the session to Keas and their Scout Leaders above the waterfall on Wautaiti Stream. 3. Head torches on and ready to explore! Scouts take a closer look at life in the Wautaiti Stream after dark. Back page: 4. Briar and Kate answering questions about Gee's minnow traps. 5. Kayaking up the Wautaiti Stream with the Venturers after dark. 6. The Scout group captured a common smelt.

## Next Steps



A community planting day is being considered at a property bordering the Wautaiti Stream. Local landowners are developing this as an inanga spawning zone.

‘Wai Connection’ has expressed keen interest in continuing to work alongside the Riverhead Scout Group, to deepen their understanding of freshwater environment protection. ‘Wai Connection’ intends to keep seeking engagement opportunities throughout the Rangitopuni catchment, to help spotlight the area’s freshwater values.



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To learn more about the Rangitopuni Catchment & Riverhead Scouts, or how ‘Wai Connection – Tatai Ki Te Wai’ is supporting them, please contact:

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